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SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, S/WCI

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SUBJECT: EXTRADITION OF GUANTANAMO KUWAITI PRISONER, NASSER  
NAJD AL-MUTAIRI, MAKING FRONT PAGE NEWS

1. The upcoming release of one of the twelve Kuwaitis currently detained at Guantanamo Naval Base, Nasser Najd Al-Mutairi, is front page news here, as the press reports an expected transfer date back to Kuwait before Ramadan, o/a October 15. Quoting the Foreign Minister, Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Al-Sabah, as well as unnamed security sources, Arabic and English newspapers state that the release is due to the coordinated efforts of the USG and the GOK. In addition, the Arabic press gave the optimistic view that this would be the first 'drop' in a coming rain of releases, lending the idea that all twelve of the detainees would soon be back on Kuwaiti soil. One item of note is a follow-up article which states that Al-Mutairi will be released in order to visit his relatives before his interrogation begins.

2. The GOK's ability to broker a deal with the USG is an item of great public interest. Reporting on Al-Mutairi's transfer seems to imply that the GOK has a special relationship with the USG and that is why the transfer is occurring so quickly after the June 28 Supreme Court ruling, in comparison to detainees of other nationalities. Initial reports in the media simply stated that Al-Mutairi will be transferred into the custody of the Kuwaiti State Security (KSS) but after a day of rest, the media has now added the spin that Al-Mutairi might actually be released upon his arrival.

3. The September 26 Arabic Times states that Al-Mutairi "will be allowed to meet his family under the sponsorship of one of his relatives...(and) will be required to return for interrogation a few days later." It goes on to say that unnamed security forces state that Al-Mutairi will be "acquitted or referred to the Public Prosecution depending upon the results of the interrogation." Given the very public debate on the treatment of detainees in Guantanamo and, later, Abu Ghraib, there is expected to be very close attention paid to the results of any interrogation. In addition, the Arabic press continues to keep Khaled Al Odah, detainee Fawzi Al-Odah's father, in the spotlight, often quoting him for his take on recent developments. Khaled was a key proponent of the Supreme Court brief and is listed as a party to the case.

4. COMMENT. In stark contrast to the media reports, post contacts stress that the GOK will adhere to the bilateral agreement governing Al-Mutairi's transfer. They emphasize that any Kuwaiti released to the GOK will be immediately turned over to authorities. Furthermore, they realize that the handling of this transfer will affect the potential release of other detained Kuwaitis. With the ultimate goal of seeking the extradition of all Kuwaitis in U.S. custody, they are unlikely to take any action that would rock the boat. END COMMENT.

LeBaron